

USDA Foods Committee

Friday, 10/24/2014

The October meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. An addition to the agenda was made regarding discussion on NOI cherry product Horizon Fruit. The agenda was approved by Kathy McGuire and seconded by Mary Bellwood. Roll call was taken. In attendance was Amy A'Hearn, Mary Bellwood, Kathy McGuire, Kathy Simmerman, Cindy Smith, Cheryl Dickman, Julie Miller, Jane Svestka, Colleen Osborn, Tonya Losee, Sarah White, Jill Stuecker and guest Jean Easley a new Bureau consultant. Absent was Nancy Hogstad, Jessie Kuehl and Marie Miller. Previous meeting minutes were approved by Kathy McGuire and seconded by Cheryl Dickman.

Jill and Sarah gave an overview of the USDA foods councils function as there are many new members to the council this year. The council is made up of individuals from across the state that procure the state process items, give feedback to the state department regarding how to manage products and what to order as well as the state department updating members on how funds are being used.

Program updates were given. The overall budget has increased to \$20,532,189 for the 14-15 school year broken down to 8.8 million for processed (45% of total) and 3 million for DoD (15% of total). The DoD total budget has plateaued. DoD enrollment for the 15-16 school year will be in December or January. The products do have a 4.5% markup to cover shipping/freight of items. NOI participation has decreased. Last year there were 145 districts participating and this year there are 129. The schools that are participating have allocated more money towards NOI. Some issues discussed were the distributor not giving credit and items being special order. Jill did update that there have been conversations at the national level at this program and USDA has acknowledged that it may need some tweaking.

The group discussed the Cherry Fruit Pockets by Horizon Foods, and will be in touch with the company to discuss further.

An update on direct distribution was given by Sarah. The survey that was sent out about what items to order when had a better response for year 2. We will be seeing more fruit this year than last, there were issues with the blueberry shipments so those will not be in on this delivery and the fruit on the 15C order will be late. Sarah did send out a catfish survey regarding the new fillets offered. They are an oven ready, breaded product. Those members who tried them thought they were good. There are problems with keeping it crisp, inconsistent sizes and expensive. USDA is also redoing their fact sheets. Fact sheets are averages of the products, may not be exact product. They are looking to put vendor specific information out. Currently there is no AP flour available. A new 60/40 blend has become available. Sarah will send out survey for feedback regarding ordering. There have been some issues with the marinara cup. The cup shape has changed and the company could not keep up with demand. Should be coming on the 15B order.

Michelle O'Hollearn, Project Manager of the ART II grant joined the meeting to discuss the new USDA foods ordering system that is currently being build. The system is being recreated but to be more comprehensive and user friendly. Will use 1 portal account to get to the USDA foods, IowaCNP, and Direct certification. New terms are being introduced which are

1. Planned Assistance Level (PAL) = formally entitlement
2. Diverted Foods = formally NOI

New features include a comprehensive view of entire budget (Direct Distribution, Diverted Foods, and DoD). There will be a graphic to show amount spent- under or exceeded. Summer foods will also be automated. The Direct Distribution order form will have hyperlinks to each item's nutritional fact sheet item. The complaint form will also be automated. Emails will be generated from the program regarding successful orders and other notifications. There will also be more report functions. The NOI /DoD data will be uploaded monthly. Individuals will still need to complete verification of products in Processorlink and K12foodservice. The goal for completion is FY16. Plan is to have January DoD allocation in new system.

An update on the Greek yogurt pilot was given by Sarah White and Mary Bellwood. Des Moines Public is currently the only district in the state piloting the program. This is a direct shipment from the manufacturer with a minimum of 420 cases or 4oz cups. The first 3 shipments were Chobani and next deliveries will be Dannon. Mary stated that the kids are used to the sweeter flavor of yogurt compared to Greek. It has been coming in strawberry flavored. Shelf life is 45 days. Will continue to monitor program.

The State Processing food show has been set for Friday, March 6th, 2015. It will be held at the Gateway Conference Center in Ames, IA. The show will have 2 available times for participants to come. The tentative schedules follows: set up will be from 6 a.m. – 9 a.m., group A registration starts at 8:15 a.m., presentation 8:30 a.m. – 9 a.m. and food show 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. Group B registration begins at 12 noon, presentation 12:30 – 1 p.m. and food show from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Clean up is slated from 3p.m. – 4p.m. This will allow vendors 1 ½ hours to refresh food and the presentation will be held in a separate space. Sarah will make another book for participants like last year.

A discussion was also held on what Request for Proposal's to complete for this year.

Submitted by Amy A'Hearn, Secretary